

5. (Amended) The decorative item as claimed in claim 1, wherein the hard coating has a surface hardness greater than that of the basis material.

6. (Amended) The decorative item as claimed in claim 1, wherein the hard coating is constituted of a nitride, carbide, oxide, nitrido-carbide or nitrido-carbido-oxide of an element belonging to Group 4a, 5a or 6a of the periodic table.

7. (Amended) The decorative item as claimed in claim 1, wherein the hard coating is a hard coating of carbon.

10. (Amended) The decorative item as claimed in claim 1, wherein at least two hard coatings are formed on the hardened layer surface of the basis material.

11. (Amended) The decorative item as claimed in claim 1, wherein at least two hard coatings are laminated on the hardened layer surface of the basis material.

12. (Amended) The decorative item as claimed in claim 1, wherein the hard coating is disposed on portion of the hardened layer surface of the basis material.

13. (Amended) The decorative item as claimed in claim 1, further comprising a gold alloy coating disposed on a surface of the hard coating.

15. (Amended) The decorative item as claimed in claim 1, which is an exterior part of timepiece.

18. (Amended) The process as claimed in claim 16, wherein the decorative item is an exterior part of timepiece.

23. (Amended) The exterior part of timepiece as claimed in claim 21, which is one produced by machining a surface of an exterior part of timepiece and thereafter carburizing the machined surface.

26. (Amended) The wristwatch band as claimed in claim 24, wherein the band pieces are connected to each other by means of connecting parts of stainless steel, each of the connecting parts having at at least portion of its surface a carburized layer wherein carbon is diffused so as to form a solid solution.

27. (Amended) The wristwatch band as claimed in claim 24, produced by connecting the band pieces to each other by means of connecting parts, carburizing the band pieces and the connecting parts, and thereafter polishing surfaces of the band pieces.

31. (Amended) The process as claimed in claim 29, which further comprises machining surfaces of the band pieces connected by means of the connecting parts prior to the fluorination to obtain a wristwatch band having machined surfaces.

34. (Amended) The process as claimed in claim 32, which further comprises machining surfaces of the plurality of band pieces prior to the fluorination to obtain a wristwatch band having machined surfaces.

37. (Amended) The process as claimed in claim 35, which further comprises machining surfaces of the base material prior to the fluorination to obtain an exterior part of timepiece other than wristwatch band having machined surfaces.

41. (Amended) The exterior part of timepiece as claimed in claim 38, wherein the deformed layer extends from the metal surface to a depth of 2 to 100 μm .

42. (Amended) The exterior part of timepiece as claimed in claim 38, wherein the hardened layer extends from a surface of the deformed layer to a depth of 5 to 50 μm .

43. (Amended) The exterior part of timepiece as claimed in claim 38, wherein the solute atom is at least one atom selected from the group consisting of carbon, nitrogen and oxygen atoms.

44. (Amended) The exterior part of timepiece as claimed in claim 38, wherein the hardened layer has a specular surface whose Vickers hardness (HV) is 500 or greater.

47. (Amended) The process as claimed in claim 45, wherein the deformed layer is formed by subjecting the stainless steel surface to at least one of polishing and cutting operations whereby a physical external force capable of drawing the stainless steel surface substantially unidirectionally is applied to the stainless steel surface.

48. (Amended) The process as claimed in claim 45, wherein the deformed layer is formed by subjecting the stainless steel surface to at least one of cutting and grinding operations to form a face of desired shape, and
polishing the face of desired shape to form the deformed layer.

49. (Amended) The process as claimed in claim 45, wherein the stainless steel surface is subjected to grinding operation to form not only a face of desired shape but also the deformed layer.

50. (Amended) The process as claimed in claim 48, wherein the face of desired shape is substantially flat.

51. (Amended) The process as claimed in claim 48, wherein the face of desired shape is curved.

52. (Amended) The process as claimed in claim 45, wherein the deformed layer is so formed as to extend from the stainless steel surface to a depth of 2 to 100 μm .

53. (Amended) The process as claimed in claim 45, wherein the hardened layer is so formed as to extend from a surface of the deformed layer to a depth of 5 to 50 μm .

54. (Amended) The process as claimed in claim 45, wherein the solute atom is at least one atom selected from the group consisting of carbon, nitrogen and oxygen atoms.

55. (Amended) The process as claimed in claim 45, wherein the hardened layer has a specular surface whose Vickers hardness (HV) is 500 or greater.

56. (Amended) The process as claimed in claim 45, wherein the deformed layer is formed in a surface of stainless steel of a base material for timepiece exterior part produced by forging capable of realizing a high degree of deformation.

57. (Amended) The process as claimed in claim 45, wherein the hardening is carried out at a temperature which is close to recrystallization temperature of the stainless steel or below.

Please add new claims 58-69 as follows:

58. The decorative item as claimed in claim 2, wherein the hard coating and the basis material at its surface exhibit respective tones which are different from each other.

59. The decorative item as claimed in claim 3, wherein the hard coating and the basis material at its surface exhibit respective tones which are different from each other.

60. The process as claimed in claim 17, wherein the decorative item is an exterior part of timepiece.

61. The exterior part of timepiece as claimed in claim 22, which is one produced by machining a surface of an exterior part of timepiece and thereafter carburizing the machined surface.

62. The wristwatch band as claimed in claim 25, wherein the band pieces are connected to each other by means of connecting parts of stainless steel,

each of the connecting parts having at at least portion of its surface a carburized layer wherein carbon is diffused so as to form a solid solution.

63. The wristwatch band as claimed in claim 25, produced by connecting the band pieces to each other by means of connecting parts, carburizing the band pieces and the connecting parts, and thereafter polishing surfaces of the band pieces.

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64. The process as claimed in claim 30, which further comprises machining surfaces of the band pieces connected by means of the connecting parts prior to the fluorination to obtain a wristwatch band having machined surfaces.

65. The process as claimed in claim 33, which further comprises machining surfaces of the plurality of band pieces prior to the fluorination to obtain a wristwatch band having machined surfaces.

66. The process as claimed in claim 36, which further comprises machining surfaces of the base material prior to the fluorination to obtain an exterior part of timepiece other than wristwatch band having machined surfaces.

67. The process as claimed in claim 46, wherein the deformed layer is formed by subjecting the stainless steel surface to at least one of polishing and cutting operations whereby a physical external force capable of drawing the stainless steel surface substantially unidirectionally is applied to the stainless steel surface.

68. The process as claimed in claim 46, wherein the deformed layer is formed by subjecting the stainless steel surface to at least one of cutting and grinding operations to form a face of desired shape, and

polishing the face of desired shape to form the deformed layer.

69. The process as claimed in claim 47, wherein the deformed layer is

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polishing the face of desired shape to form the deformed layer.

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